



The TRAILBLAZER

January 2003

Niagara Group of the Sierra Club

Vol. XXXIV, No.5

Hufnagel Walks to Oppose PCBs in WNY

(Jim Hufnagel is a member of the Executive Committee of the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club)

Late last month I donned a skull mask and a barrel with anti-toxic waste slogans painted on it, and marched across New York State from Albany to the Town of Porter in Niagara County, as a protest against the planned importation of PCB-contaminated sludge dredged from the Hudson River. This toxic waste may be shipped across the state by rail or truck, and landfilled at the Chemical Waste Management, Inc. facility at this rural northern Niagara County town unless we act. You are now privileged as a Trailblazer reader to get the exclusive inside scoop on my famous journey that didn't make it into the newspapers.

Bill Choboy, myself and others kicked things off with a brief press conference on the steps of the Statehouse on the unseasonably cold, blustery morning of Saturday, Oct. 19. Bill, a Town of Porter Councilmember, also leads Residents for Responsible Government, the grassroots citizens

group that formed in opposition to the CWM plan.

After some picture taking and well wishing, I started walking to Western New York.

It didn't take long for things to get interesting. Unbeknownst to myself and those who planned my route for this hike, Route 5 passes right through the seedy part of Albany. Seedy? It was downright nasty. And here's Yours Truly traipsing through it in a barrel and Halloween mask.

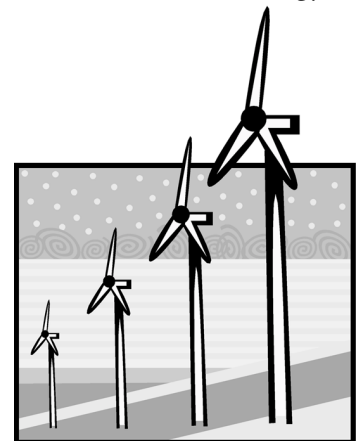
It had to be an otherworldly, amazing sight that appeared through the window of the dive bar where the patrons were enjoying their AM beer buzz. A half dozen piled out of the front door to get a better look at this apparition that had dared interrupt their libations. A barrage of slurred epithets and challenges were hurled in my direction as I scampered down the other side of the street, which, luckily, none saw fit to stagger across. **(con't on pg. 2)**

ATTN: All Users of Electricity by Michael Stroh

Niagara Mohawk and NYSEG, the two largest providers in Western New York, have recently made the task of switching to green energy both simple and affordable. Supporting this change contributes to more sustainable energy on the grid, and reduces our dependence on fossil fueled power plants.

Niagara Mohawk residential customers can choose one of the following three options:

1. New Wind Energy (product of Community Energy Inc.)
 - 50% Wind / 50% Hydro
 - 1.3cents per kWh for 100% of your usage (for every kilowatt-hour you use, you will be charged an additional 1.3 cents)
 - to sign up: 1-866-946-3123 or www.newwindenergy.com
2. Green Mountain Energy
 - 85% Hydro / 15% Wind
 - 1.5cents per kWh for 100% usage
 - to sign up: 1-866-785-4665 or www.greenmountain.com
3. Sterling Planet
 - 30% Wind / 20% Hydro / 50% Biomass
 - 1.5cents per kWh for 50%, 75%, or 100% usage (you can elect to have as little as half of your electricity charged an additional 1.5cents/kWh; consequently only half would come from renewable sources)
 - to sign up: 1-877-362-9982 or www.sterlingplanet.com



A surcharge appears as a line item on your bill, which amounts to an additional \$4 to \$8 per month for the average residential customer. Commercial customers have similar options.

NYSEG Customers: New Wind Energy can be bought in blocks of 100 kWh for \$2.50 per month (2 block minimum). Over one year, every block of wind power purchased will reduce carbon dioxide emissions the equivalent to planting 125 trees or not driving 2,000 miles. To sign up: www.nyseg.com or 1-800-356-9734.

(Hufnagel con't from pg. 1)

Things calmed down after leaving the Albany city limits. Later that day I pulled up at a country store and met a gentleman who said he had worked for GE for many years, GE, of course, being the corporation that originally dumped the PCBs into the Hudson. He educated me on how GE created and has abandoned a "necklace" of toxic sites across the state, promising jobs in return for the right to foul and pollute our land and water. Now the jobs are gone but the devastation remains.

Due to space limitations I can't tell you the many people who helped with this protest walk by putting me up, feeding me, driving me to and from my route, etc. Sierra Club came through for me in a big way. Niagara Group ExComm member Rev. Charles Lamb was able to arrange much across the state through his religious network. Niagara Group Chair Mike Kukla assisted Charles with the phone calls. Dr. Rhea Jezer of Atlantic Chapter and her husband Dan were gracious hosts along the way.

While walking across New York State to alert folks to the transport of Hudson River PCB sludge through their communities at the estimated rate of 10 trucks an hour, 10 hours a day, 7 day a week for 3 or more years, it was interesting to observe peoples' reactions. The initial amusement at my outfit quickly turned to a somber, shocked demeanor when I told them of the toxic waste that would likely pass through their town, past their homes and schools. I would leave them with an informational bro-

chure and a plea to contact their legislators.

It all eventually came down to that short stretch on Military Road in Niagara Falls, Rte. 18 and finally 2.5 miles up Balmer Road to the address of the proposed CWM toxic dumping ground. I had scarcely walked a hundred yards up Balmer when a teenager and his girlfriend started shadowing me with their car. Pulling directly alongside with the window down, the boy laid a pretty good string of insults, names and taunts on me in an obvious attempt to pick a fight. After walking nearly 300 miles across the state without a similar drive-by incident having taken place, what an amazing coincidence that this occurred just down the road from CWM.

My barrel is now retired as a permanent exhibit at the Town of Porter Historical Society, nestled among artifacts of our country's heritage going back hundreds of years. Wouldn't it be great if future generations were puzzled by it. Let's make it happen!

Bruce Kershner to Speak at Kenan Center

Bruce Kershner, author of "Secret Places and Scenic Treasures of Western New York and Southern Ontario," will speak and show slides in the Taylor Theater of Kenan Center, 433 Locust, in Lockport on February 11 at 1:00 p.m. It is free to the public. For more information phone 625-8789 or 433-2617.

Election Results:

The six candidates who were elected to the Executive Committee of the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club are: Mike Kukla, Larry Beahan, Genevieve Robins, Art Klein, Ginger Ursitti, and Paul Maine. Their biographical statements appeared in the last issue of *The Trailblazer*. They join six others whose terms are continuing. Terms are for two years, with the twelve members serving rotating terms. (That is, six are elected each year). Any member of the Sierra Club, Niagara Group, is welcome to run for election. While all members (anyone who contributes to the Sierra Club) are welcome at all meetings, the Executive Committee members are the ones who vote on issues.

Tips on Contacting Congress

To write a Senator: The Honorable (full name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Dear Senator...

To write a Representative: The Honorable (full name), United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Dear Representative...

When writing the chair of a committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to begin: Dear Mr. Chairman, or Madam Chairwoman, or Dear Mr. Speaker.

When using e-mail, you may find addresses at www.house.gov or www.senate.gov. To find phone numbers, go to www.c-span.org/congress and then go to Congressional Directory. Or you may simply call 202-224-3121 and ask for the person's number. If you can not get through to the person you are calling, ask to speak to the aide who handles that issue.

Good News From Hamburg

Kathleen Schriver and Donna R. Pepe from Hamburg attended the Niagara Group meeting on November 26 and brought good news about the struggle to save parkland in Hamburg.

Supreme Court Justice Edward Rath ruled on November 9 that the land in question is indeed a public park impressed with a public trust that bars the Village from any sale for private development without prior approval from the State Legislature.

He also wrote, "Addressing the heart of the matter the Court declares that Petitioners have established that an express dedication and acceptance of the parcel as a public park has occurred."

The struggle may not be over, but this is a victory to save a 15 acre parcel of land in its natural state. Congratulations to the Hamburg environmentalists!

Richard Lippes Retained to Fight CWM Expansion

The Residents for Responsible Government group in Niagara County has now retained Sierra Club member Richard Lippes to be their lead attorney in their struggle to stop the proposed expansion of Chemical Waste Management in the Town of Porter. The decision of a lower court to dismiss RRG's case is being appealed.

Hufnagel Attends Conservation Planning Retreat

The Sierra Club Conservation Planning Retreat was held Dec. 6-8 at the Airlie Conference Center in Virginia and I was proud to be a delegate representing the 2200 members of Niagara Group at this national conference, and as a newly appointed member of the Sierra Club Global Population and Environment Program Committee (GPEPC). This conference is an opportunity for Conservation campaign committees, such as Challenge to Sprawl, and the Environmental Quality Strategy Team, to review past plans and develop new draft plans for 2003-2004. In addition, committees survey, assess and evaluate accomplishments and challenges of each Conservation program, explore ways to better integrate campaigns and take part in advanced planning skills workshops - *Jim Hufnagel*

No one told this child Kodak's dangerous dioxin emissions don't stop at the fence line.

Here's a candid shot of Eastman Kodak, one of the nation's largest polluters of cancer-causing chemicals:

Everyday, over 21,000 people breathe in dioxin and other pollutants from Kodak's hazardous waste incinerators. Unfortunately, Kodak's dangerous dioxin releases may be taking a profound toll on the people of Rochester, NY. As a multi-national corporation with sales exceeding \$13 billion, Kodak needs to make an investment in our children's health and Rochester's future by phasing out their toxic incinerators.



Take Action now to clean up Kodak Kid's Air!

Join the Kodak Kids Clean Air Campaign and hold accountable one of the biggest corporate polluters in the world. You will receive monthly action alerts asking you to email or mail brief letters to help clean up Kodak.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Fax: _____

Return to:

Citizens' Environmental Coalition
425 Elmwood Ave
Buffalo, NY 14222

phone: 716-885-6848

fax: 716-885-6845

email: cecwny@buffnet.net

www.kodakstoxiccolors.org

Photo: Julia Wells Design: Paul Salamone

Fundamentals *by Frank Mendel*

A fundamental tenet of modern (i.e. post Darwinian) biology is that all life forms on earth are related, later forms resulting from chance and selective modifications of code inherited from earlier ones. Following from this tenet is the idea that complex forms developed from antecedent simpler forms. Ironically, evidence for the fundamental kinship among all life forms as well as for the method of constructing complex forms by modifying or usurping simpler forms is now being displayed in unprecedented detail as a result of the Human Genome Project (HGP). Methods and machines designed to decode the entire human genome were developed and tested by first cracking the codes of progressively more complex organisms. The astonishing, yet predictable findings of our first large-scale, fully automated decoding of genomes of representatives of yeasts, flatworms, insects, and humans are that they all use exactly the same code, the same building blocks, and the same processes to accomplish tasks fundamental to life. Indeed, a major surprise unveiled by the HGP is how few fundamental differences there are among codes for seemingly very different forms. The strikingly similar codes and processes shared by all life forms have important implications for potential cutting and pasting of code from one species to another (genetic engineering), or rewriting or overwriting it within a spe-

cies (gene therapy), but even more profound ramifications for debunking an assumption long held by many societies and individuals. That is, humans are fundamentally different from other life forms, and not a part of and a result of a common heritage, history, and environment.

This fundamental misconception that man is not a part of the complex and ancient web of life seems likely to have contributed to his ability to unwittingly and even actively and consciously destroy his near kin (other animals and plants) and their (and hence his) sustaining environments. So long as the number of humans was small, their impact on global systems was negligible, irrespective of attitudes toward other life forms and their support systems. Now that we humans number six billion and are on pace to double in number in the next century, this unfounded dissociation from other living forms will almost certainly result in an acceleration of the ongoing extinction event, an event that already ranks among the most significant in the history of life on earth. Without changes in our appreciation of our fundamental dependence on naturally systems, and the threat to those systems posed by very large numbers of humans, our legacy to future generations must be, at a minimum, an impoverished earth.

(Mr. Mendel is an active member of the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club)

Contact an Environmental Ally!

Here is a list of officers and members of the Buffalo Group of the Sierra Club who are willing to be contacted with environmental concerns. Look to see who is in your neighborhood and get in touch. Let's work together.

Beahan, Larry, Amherst 14226
716-839-3112, larry_beahan@adelphia.net

Burns, Steve, Orchard Park
716-662-2853, sburns50@email.msn.com

Gisel, Bonnie J.
209-403-6676, bjgisel@yahoo.com

Jim Hufnagel, Wilson
716-751-3877, stopat2@lycos.com.

*Contact for these issues: Population, Environment,
National Forests, Niagara County issues*

Jontz, Jane, Snyder
716-839-0110, jontzja@hotmail.com

Kaszubski, Liz, 1463 Fairfield Dr., N. Tonawanda
716-695-3570, lizanddan@juno.com

Kukla, Mike, Buffalo
716-833-3242, kukla@buffalo.edu

Lamb, Charles, 335 Walnut Lane, Youngstown, 14174
745-7037, clamb0@prodigy.net

Lippes, Richard, 1260 Delaware Ave. Buffalo
884-4800, rlippes@concentric.net

Maine, Paul, Buffalo, 882-0250

Robins, Genevieve, New Amsterdam, 14216, 875-5226

Ursitti, Ginger, Kenmore
874-6769, ginger_u2001@yahoo.com

White, Gretchen, Buffalo
884-0955, gretchone@aol.com

These people volunteered to be listed at our Oct. 22 meeting. More names may be added in the future. Let us know if we can be of help in your efforts to save the environment!

If you have information you wish to share or copy for use in the Trailblazer, please send it to Charles Lamb at 335 Walnut Lane, Youngstown, NY 14174 or clamb0@prodigy.net or at 716-745-7037. Deadlines for the year are as follows: March 10, June 10, September 10, and December 10.

The Niagara Group of the Sierra Club meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Harlem Road Community Center, 4255 Harlem Road south of Route 5 (Main Street). All Sierrans are invited! (For December 2002 only, we'll meet on the THIRD Tuesday, Dec. 27, since the 4th Tuesday is Christmas Eve!)

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